

What is the NIH eRA eCGAP electronic grant submission program?

The electronic Competitive Grant Application Process is not just an electronic delivery process but a system to system exchange. It originates with a Service Provider, one of six companies who have developed high-end software to interface with NIH, who provides a system for the grant applicant to enter the appropriate information. The Service Provider uploads the documents and then converts them into the proper electronic format to send to NIH.

What kind of competitive grant applications can be submitted electronically to NIH?

Only select competitive grant applications can be submitted electronically to NIH. For the March 1 receipt date and later, NIH will accept electronic submission of new, competing continuation and revised grants for *only* the following types of grants – the standard research grant (R01), small research projects (R03) and exploratory /developmental research (R21).

What are the benefits to users?

A user benefits in many ways by submitting his or her application electronically:

- Electronic submission allows for faster processing in Receipt and Referral and reviewers get the application quicker; so it cuts down the time from submission to award.
- The electronic grant image of the application is in color as opposed to black and white for paper applications.
- The electronic image is clearer than a scanned image of a paper application.
- There are other benefits that accrue to NIH: it reduces their scanning, printing and data entry costs; streamlines the grant application process and from an environmental perspective, helps save a multitude of trees.
- Another advantage for the applicant is that by submitting grants electronically, he or she is getting attuned to the way most government grants will be handled in the future —electronically.

Who are the intended users?

Electronic receipt is targeted towards all of NIH's grant applicant community. Applicants can range from the lone researcher sending in an application to the big institution looking for grants. The idea is to stimulate the interest of the Principal Investigator and the Signing Official.

How experienced is NIH with electronic applications?

NIH has successfully conducted five pilots since October 2003 with more than 100 applications coming in from all over the country and over 30 research institutions participating. February 2005 marked a milestone for NIH as it opened up submission for select grant mechanisms to all grantees.

In the future, NIH plans to expand to accepting other types of grant mechanisms as well as develop the capability to electronically handle more grant-related transactions.

How does an applicant participate?

Since NIH has not developed a front end for electronic submission, applications need to be submitted electronically through a third party, the Service Providers, who have the high end software and a system-to-system interface with NIH to facilitate this process. NIH made the decision not to develop a front end because Grants.gov, a one stop, Web-based, federal portal for accepting government-wide grant submissions, was already planned.

- NIH is in the process of developing an interface with Grants.gov that will enable applicants to submit their grant applications electronically to NIH through their portal. For now, you can turn to one of the six external Service Providers.
- If an institution works with NIH to develop this interface with NIH, they can also submit directly to NIH.

Who are the authorized Service Providers?

Six companies have participated in five pilots with NIH since October 2003. They are:

- Cayuse Inc., Portland, Oregon (www.cayuse.com/)
- Clinical Tools, Chapel Hill, North Carolina (www.clinicaltools.com)
- eRA Software Systems, Long Beach, California (www.gams.org/)
- Formatta Corp, Herndon, Virginia (<http://www.formatta.com/about/partners/nih/>)
- InfoEd International, Albany, New York (www.infoed.org/)
- Research and Management Systems (RAMS), Germantown, Maryland (<http://www.ramscompany.com/grantserver/landing.html>)

Their role is to

- develop the operational software to prepare and submit e-grant applications
- deliver the applications in standard XML stream to NIH
- receive and distribute NIH messages to grantees/applicants.

Where do we go for more information?

Please visit

http://era.nih.gov/Projectmgmt/SBIR/sbir_grants.htm.

We also have an applicant information package that may be helpful to you at http://era.nih.gov/Projectmgmt/SBIR/files/participant_package_05-03-05final1.pdf



Submitting Grants Electronically

Frequently asked questions